



Why Dominican?

Study Guide for Candidacy Module 5: Personal Prayer and Contemplation

The purpose of the Candidacy phase of formation is to provide individuals with the opportunity to participate in continued discernment of Dominican life as a lay person. Essential to this process is the grounding of one's life in prayer. Since prayer is an indication of a relationship with God that is initiated by God, the intent of this module is to present additional knowledge of some opportunities for the Candidate to respond to God's beckoning in various ways.

PRAYER/CONTEMPLATION

As you prepare to discuss this topic of personal prayer and contemplation, ask the Holy Spirit to help you "take inventory" humbly, honestly, and hopefully of the status of your relationship with God. Journal your thoughts initially and throughout your study by asking yourself such basic questions as:

1. What place does God have in my life: is God the focal point or on the periphery or somewhere in-between or even way out of sight/mind?
2. When and where am I aware of God in my life each day and week?
3. Who is God to me i.e. do I think of God as a friend, a judge, a miracle worker, etc.?
4. In what ways/times do I encounter God in a positive way? What seems to prevent a deepening of my relationship with God?
5. Into what action/ apostolate does my prayer seem to guide me?

STUDY

The study session will focus on presenting opportunities for you to spend additional time in personal prayer. The participants will be asked to share ways in which their personal prayer life has produced fruit personally and directed them into action. Begin by skimming the articles used for discussion in Inquiry and reviewing your notes from that study session.

The Suggested Readings that accompany this Study Guide are designed to provide an overview of the topic. You are invited to skim those about which you are already familiar and spend more reflective time with those that are new to you or present a variation that catches your attention. Even the selections from older articles contain valuable food for thoughtful prayer, discernment, and spiritual growth. The Formation Team will alert you to any articles that will receive special emphasis during the study session. You are also encouraged to contribute current articles from periodicals, newspapers, and other sources that are pertinent to the topic.

At the point in your study when you feel that you are prepared for this session, whether that be after a day or a week or after a month of reading, read one final article by Fr. Richard Rohr on transformation. It can be found at the following link: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/fr-richard-rohr-/lent-is-about-transformation_b_1282070.html. Although this article was written as an aid during Lent, its message is applicable to all seasons of one's life.

The main topics to be discussed will include:

1. The prominent place of personal prayer and contemplation in the life of a Dominican
2. The essential connection between personal prayer and action for a Dominican
3. Ways to "find" more time for prayer
4. Opportunities for prayer and contemplation which might facilitate the participants' responses to the promptings of the Holy Spirit
5. Prayer and transformation

COMMUNITY

Although there will be information and questions discussed at this study session, the primary activity will be the participants' sharing of parts of their personal prayer life. Be prepared to share both the struggles and successes you feel comfortable in sharing. Be mindful that your sharing is intended to foster the building of community by emphasizing our common need for encouragement and support from within the group. True community will be deepened by becoming companions on our common journey with each other and with God.

APOSTOLATE

The prayer life of a Dominican is deeply personal, but it is also geared toward others by discerning where God wants the person to become active in mission. A sharing by someone else may spark an interest within yourself concerning how to put your own prayer into action. Your sharing may be a catalyst for someone else. As you pray, read, and reflect in preparation for the study session, be attentive to where your own prayer may be leading you.